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Salvation Army, the Bridge Programme, Cloyne 12 Chapel Street, St Kilda East



Cloyne, 2002

Sir John Madden (1844-1918) was born at the village of Cloyne, south-east of the city of Cork on the south coast of Ireland, above Ballycotton Bay. His father managed the Ark

Life Insurance Company in London before the parents and their seven sons immigrated to Melbourne, arriving in January 1857. Madden senior was admitted as an attorney in the Supreme Court of Victoria in April. The brothers attended St Patrick's College, East Melbourne. In 1864, John graduated LL.B. from the University of Melbourne. After early legal success, he married Gertrude Stephen. John stood for parliament. After a shaky start he remained an MLA from 1871 until 1883 and minister of justice. His views were particularly reactionary, holding that most of mankind were too stupid to be entrusted with the 'rights of property'.

From 1883 during Victoria's Land Boom, his legal practice prospered. His learning and preparation combined with charm and confidence were admired and he became the doyenne of the Victorian Bar for many years. In 1890 he was engaged in 30% of the cases that came to the Supreme Court and as many in the Full Court. At the height of his career his annual income has been estimated at between £7,000-20,000, hence his refusal to be appointed a judge. He opposed the Legal Reform Practice Act (1891), for fear it would expose his own negligence.

In 1889, he was appointed (unpaid) Chancellor of the University of Melbourne and despite fears that he would not spend sufficient time on the job; he remained Chancellor until his death. Eventually, in 1893 he succeeded Judge Higginbotham as Chief Justice and was knighted. This was immediately following the dramatic collapse of the economy and he accepted only a £3,500 salary. His judgements were much criticised for their 'bad law and loquacity'. In 1899 he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Victoria.

Lady Casey described his "wide Irish face" and his 'moustache stiffly waxed in points'. He was actively involved in several sports and in 1887, it is said that he profitably dreamed the winner of the Melbourne Cup.

In 1887, at the height of the land boom, he built his thirty-room mansion, Cloyne in prestigious East St Kilda. Madden bought land from the Free Presbyterian Church, in 1884. It is a very large, relatively dull pile of 30 rooms, said (by his grandson of the same name), to have been designed and built by the little known architect George A. Parsons. Parsons is only known to have built three buildings in Melbourne over 1888 -1906 and another as George Parsons & Son in 1906.

The mansion faces Alma Park West, rather than Chapel Street, with a *porte cochère* to the south. Both elevations are asymmetrical, in a late Italianate manner. There is a ballroom with an orchestra balcony. It was a place of lavish entertainment and Madden is said to have been an indulgent father. The family also spent time at their country property, Yamla at Frankston, a hay and dairy farm. Lady Madden was president of the Bush Nursing Association and of the Austral Salon (in which Lady Clarke was also active).

In 1912, Madden sold Cloyne and moved to rooms in Cliveden Mansions, the great Melbourne landmark in Wellington Parade, East Melbourne, and the former town mansion of Sir William Clarke. After the death of Lady Clarke it had been sold to the Baillieu

family for merely a quarter of its construction cost and converted into 50 self-contained luxury apartments. In 1968 it was demolished, and became the site of the Hilton Hotel. Some bits of the Clarke magnificence decorate the hotel's public rooms.

Sir John Madden died suddenly in 1918 and is buried in the Catholic section of the Melbourne General Cemetery, although surely St Kilda Cemetery would have been more convenient. He left an estate of £30,000 not an excessive amount for a life of such grandiloquence.

In the 1930s, a major addition to Cloyne obscured it from Chapel Street. It became a boarding house and later a yoga school. By the 1970s, as Cloyne Court, it had been acquired by Funerals Pty.Ltd. In 1984 it was sold to the Trustees of the Order of the Sons of Temperance, a non-profit friendly society established in the USA in 1840 and Victoria in 1861 at Geelong. Cr Slaterry said he was delighted to see such a 'proper society come to St Kilda'. Reassuringly, the society no longer requires total abstinence of its members. Cloyne is now owned by the Salvation Army as the centre of its Bridge Programme.

When the Free Presbyterian Church sold the land for Cloyne to Madden in 1877, it used the proceeds to build two substantial houses at 92 and 94 Alma Road, in the Tudor manner. They were converted to flats in the 1930s.

The house and stables at 94, Aldourie, were first occupied by the Hon. Alex Fraser (1802-88). Fraser emigrated from Inverness, Scotland in 1832 with his new wife Ann and became a pastoralist, auctioneer and agent. He lived in St Kilda and in 1857 was elected to its first municipal council, becoming mayor in 1864-65. From 1858-81 he was an MLC.

In clear opposition to the political stance of Madden, Alex Fraser consistently supported attempts to reform the Legislative Council. He supported the free trade movement. He worked consistently for education, as superintendent of St Kilda Wesleyan Sunday School, as a founder of Wesley College and in guiding the Education Bill through the Legislative Council in 1872. He was pious and conscientious. He and Madden were neighbours for only a year, but one wonders if they had anything at all in common.

At 609-611 Toorak Road (cnr Kooyong Road) Toorak is another Cloyne, designed by the eminent architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear in 1926 for Louis Nelkin, a brother-in-law of W.L. Baillieu (45). The connection between the two Melbourne Cloynes is not yet known.

References

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